

BOOK REVIEW

The Preparation and Curation of Insects (new revised edition)

by Annette K. Walker and Trevor K. Crosby

DSIR Information Series 163, Wellington, 1988. 92 pp. Mail order price \$18.70

This handbook of entomological techniques is an indispensable publication for any serious New Zealand entomologist, whether amateur or professional. Although the book has evolved as an in house guide to the methods used by the curators of the New Zealand Arthropod Collection (NZAC), most of their techniques should have broad applicability and it therefore serves as a standard for New Zealand insect collections. In addition, the authors have included some methods that are alternatives to the NZAC procedures.

The book includes information on: the preparation, mounting and storage of insects (including slide mounting); labelling and coding (including the NZAC standard abbreviations and area codes); organization and curation of collections (including the packaging and posting of specimens); restoration of specimens; a checklist of entomological supplies and their suppliers; and formulae for many of the common fixatives, preservatives, etc., used in entomological work.

This fully revised edition contains almost twice the number of pages of the original and

includes new material on the sending of specimens to specialists, the hazardous properties of chemicals, formulae for fixatives, preservatives, etc., and an extended reference list.

A minor criticism is that references to slide preparation of specific insect orders is lacking on page 21. Nevertheless, this is an excellent handbook overall. It is well presented and easy to follow, has helpful illustrations and there are only a few typographical errors. However, compared to the first edition, which came out in 1979 and cost only \$2.50, it is a remarkably expensive book (\$18.70), especially considering the relatively small amount of additional information included. If you are a serious entomologist and don't have the first edition it is well worth procuring, but if you already own the first edition the cost might just put you off.

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